

Historic Contact at Camden NHL

Reverse of silver medal inscribed, "Ye King of Machotick." Photo by the Virginia Department of Historic Resources courtesy of the Virginia Historical Society.

The Camden National Historic Landmark, located in Caroline County, Virginia, comprises approximately 1,400 acres of bottomland along the southern shore of the Rappahannock River situated about 50 kilometers below the falls of the river at Fredericksburg. Listed in the National Register of Historic Places on November 17, 1969, the property was recognized for the outstanding architectural significance of the magnificent manor house which has been the focal point of Camden plantation since 1859. Considered "one of the most complete and best preserved Italianate country houses in America," the structure earned Camden designation as a National Historic Landmark on November 11, 1971.

For many years, however, the significance of Camden was underestimated by the preservation community. This situation changed in 1984 when a survey completed by the Virginia Department of Historic Resources (VDHR), then known as the Division of Historic Landmarks, showed that, in addition to its surviving architectural features, the property holds a rich and diverse array of archeological resources which had been largely overlooked. Preserved within the soil at Camden is a complex record of the lives of the many groups of Native American and Anglo- and African-American peoples who have called the middle stretches of the Rappahannock River their home over a period spanning almost ten thousand years.

Ironically, in 1968, in an article on Camden for the magazine *Arts in Virginia*, architectural historian Richard Howland commented that appreciation for the plantation's mid-19th-century manor house represented a notable change in professional interests, which merely 40 years earlier had overwhelmingly favored the 18th century. Of course, rather than remaining static since 1968, the interests of historic preservation have continued to expand. We now concern ourselves with an even wider range of resource types, whether they be architectural or archeological, which we consider fundamental to a comprehensive understanding of America's past. In the more

than 25 years that have passed since the property's registration, the results of the VDHR's archeological survey of Camden illustrate the benefits of being mindful of these changes in our own perceptions and occasionally taking the time to re-examine and reevaluate the properties we believe we already understand.

Although both the 1969 National Register and the 1971 National Historic Landmark nomination reports focused on the Camden manor house, each also included a brief description of one archeological site on the property, 44CE3. Tested in 1964-65 under the direction of Howard A. MacCord, Sr., then State Archeologist with the Virginia State Library, the site yielded numerous Native American and Anglo-American artifacts dated c. 1680-1710, including a silver medallion inscribed "Ye King of Machotick." In 1882, a similar medallion inscribed "Ye King of Patomeck" had been found at an unrecorded location on the plantation. In an excavation report which appeared in the *Archaeological Society of Virginia's Quarterly Bulletin* in 1969, MacCord interpreted site 44CE3 as the remains of a single cabin occupied during the late-17th century by members of an Indian family who may have been tenants of an English planter.

MacCord continued to study the archeology of Camden intermittently from the late 1960s through the mid-1970s, and it was the results of these later investigations which initially encouraged VDHR archeologists to return to the property in 1983. By 1976, MacCord had identified 12 archeological sites at Camden. Although MacCord never had the opportunity to publish these findings, both his field notes and artifact collections were filed at the VDHR where they were available for study. A review of these by VDHR staff a few years later presented quite a surprise. Six sites surveyed in the immediate vicinity of 44CE3 had produced artifact assemblages similar to the excavated site, thereby suggesting that the story of Native American settlement on the property during the late 17th century was far more complex than earlier understood. This portion of the Camden property clearly required re-examination, so



arrangements were made between VDHR staff and MacCord to visit the property together in the fall of 1983.

One trip to Camden quickly suggested that the entire property had enormous potential for containing numerous still unidentified historic and prehistoric archeological resources. With the support and encouragement of landowners Mr. and Mrs. Richard T. Pratt, and of farm manager Mr. John Davis, the VDHR initiated an archeological survey in December 1983 with fieldwork continuing intermittently through the following year. Conceived as a reconnaissance survey, the project had two major objectives: 1) to produce a more complete archeological inventory of the Landmark, and 2) to gather preliminary information on archeological site types and their distribution in a floodplain setting within the middle Rappahannock River Valley. While the field survey was conducted, then VDHR staff historian Martha W. McCartney examined numerous historical records pertinent to the region and interviewed Mr. Pratt, whose family has held the Camden property continuously since the late 18th century.

These activities fully proved Camden's enormous archeological potential and significance. Included among the 95 localities identified in the survey were a wide variety of site types capable of providing important new information on historic contact relations. When the northeast sector of the property containing 44CE3 was re-examined, for example, it was found to contain 19 additional sites representing components of a mid- to late-17th-century Native American village. The archeological remains of this village are widely distributed along a terrace extending 850 meters parallel to the Rappahannock River. Although the terrace has been plowed and is littered with stone tool manufacturing debris dating from the Archaic and Woodland periods, sites of historic Native

American occupation are still distinguished on the ground surface as discrete concentrations of ceramic sherds and oyster shell. Of the 20 sites identified, eight containing very dense concentrations of debris are believed to represent locations of house structures within the village. More widely dispersed dwellings may also have been identified at two other surveyed sites. Both were separated from the main village by small streams running west and southeast of the main village.

When compared to the artifacts recovered from an earlier Late Woodland period (c. A.D. 900-1600) village also identified at Camden, the ceramics associated with the Historic Contact period Native American settlement pose some interesting questions regarding the movements and subsequent social integration of diverse groups of native peoples during the colonial era. The majority of ceramics from the historic village are typologically related to the Potomac Creek series, a type of sand-tempered pottery commonly associated with Late Woodland period sites within the Inner Coastal Plain and Piedmont of Virginia and Maryland. Also found at the historic village, however, are small quantities of shell-tempered ceramics apparently derived from the Outer Coastal Plain Late Woodland Townsend ceramic tradition. Despite their differences, both ceramics show the influence of European pottery styles in their form and preparation.

Martha McCartney's examination of 17th- and 18th-century records brought to light a wealth of information to complement the field investigations at Camden. Documents affirmed that many Native American peoples were displaced from their original homelands by expanding English colonial settlements during the 1600s. In an effort to relieve tensions between the two groups, the Virginia colony set aside several tracts of land along the Rappahannock River as preserves for the native peoples. By the mid-17th century, the Nanzattico Indians held one of these preserves, which encompassed land on both sides of the Rappahannock River in the vicinity of Camden and Portobago Bay to the east. Documents indicate that a village of Portobago Indians was located with the Nanzattico settlement near the mouth of Portobago Creek in 1657. In 1684, at the behest of the colonial government, the Rappahannock Indians were transported from their lands downriver to the Nanzattico preserve.

Writing of his visit to a Native American village in or near the Nanzattico preserve in 1686, Durand de Dauphine, a French Huguenot, noted: "These savages have rather pretty houses, the walls as well as roofs ornamented with trees." The native people de Dauphine met wore both European and traditional garments, and the

Camden surface survey. Photo courtesy of the Virginia Department of Historic Resources.





Colono ware spoon

women “made pots, earthen vases, and smoking pipes [which] the Christians buying these pots or vases fill them with Indian corn which is the price of them.”

Other documents chronicle colonial penetration of the area. Among the earliest patents to land in and around

Camden was Sir

Thomas Lunsford's 1650 3,000-acre claim. In 1670, Lunsford's daughter Katherine received permission to seat the property, provided “that [it] may not prejudice the Indians now living upon part of the said land.” A plat prepared in 1738 to resolve a complex land dispute depicts the old Lunsford patent and identifies its northwestern portion as the “Middle Town.” This area corresponds to the location of the large historic Native American archeological complex identified during the Camden survey. The Nanzattico community eventually dissolved as English settlers seized its lands. Following the murders of several settlers in 1705, the colonial government ordered all Nanzattico adults deported to Antigua and the children sold into indentured servitude. Not all Indians were forced from the area at that time. In the 1920s, for example, anthropologist Frank Speck found that as many as 500 people in the nearby Virginia counties of King George, Essex, and King and Queen traced descent from Indian ancestors.

The settlement discovered in the VDHR survey comprises one of the largest late contact period archeological complexes yet identified within the circum-Chesapeake region. It contains deposits that have yielded and remain capable of yielding important new information on the cultural adaptations of native peoples during a very disruptive period characterized by the displacement of many groups. Situated as it was within the frontier of the Virginia colony, the settlement's deposits can also provide investigators with new insights into the nature of social and economic relations between Native Americans and European settlers.

The results of the VDHR Camden archeological survey were summarized in a formal addendum to the original National Register nomination form and submitted to the Keeper of the National

Register in September 1986. This report subsequently became the basis of another addendum expanding the areas of significance encompassed by the Camden National Historic Landmark undertaken as part of the Historic Contact theme study. Working with Mary Ellen Hodges, who had directed the Camden survey while she was a staff archeologist with the VDHR, and with Martha McCartney, former VDHR historian, VDHR archeologist E. Randolph Turner, III sponsored preparation of this addendum. Turner coordinated the sponsorship of the VDHR Camden National Historic Landmark thematic upgrade and other Historic Contact theme study efforts with his office's Virginia Company study.

A site visit conducted on May 7, 1991, confirmed both the intact nature of Camden archeological deposits and the continuing support of the Pratt family for the preservation of cultural resources on their property. Addendum information recognizing the national significance of archeological resources associated with Historic Contact period Native American life at Nanzattico was formally incorporated into Camden National Historic Landmark documentation by the National Park System Advisory Board on August 11, 1993.

Spurred on by the publication of Stephen R. Potter's study, *Commoners, Tribute, and Chiefs: The Development of Algonquian Culture in the Potomac Valley* (University Press of Virginia, 1993) and stimulated by the response of the state's archeological and preservation communities to the Historic Contact theme study and the VDHR's Virginia Company research project, Department archeologists have recently completed the first season of a five-year project to more fully study the Nanzattico Indian community. The Nanzattico Archaeological Research Project will look at archeological and written records to more accurately identify archeological indicators of local occupation, trace the evolution of the Powhatan and Patowomeck chiefdoms, and assess the effects of contact with Europeans in the lower Rappahannock Valley. Enlisting the services of volunteers and undertaken in an area where archeological resources are facing unprecedented residential and industrial development pressure, the project will serve as a model for public involvement and educational training in archeology through such activities as avocational and teacher training, innovative use of video as an educational medium, and participation in Virginia Archaeology Month and the new Teaching Through Historic Places programs. Information preserved at the Camden National Historic Landmark and other locales associated with the Nanzattico preserve also will be extremely valuable for promoting and assisting heritage educa-

tion and tourism programs associated with the upcoming Four Hundred Year Jamestown Anniversary in 2007 sponsored by the Commonwealth of Virginia, the Association for the Preservation of Virginia Antiquities, and the National Park Service.

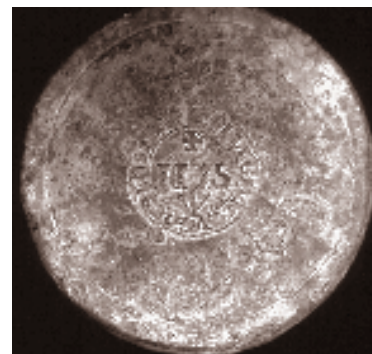
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Much of this article is adapted from "Camden: Another Look Seventeen Years After Registration", an article by Mary Ellen N. Hodges published in the Fall, 1986 issue of the magazine *Notes on Virginia*. Appreciation is extended to the Virginia Department of Historic Resources for permission to reprint this material.

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Research and Preservation at Norridgewock NHL



Communion vessel lid inscribed with the seal of Sebastian Rale's Jesuit Seminary at Lyon found at Old Point. Photo by Bruce J. Bourque.

The Historic Contact period village at Norridgewock is well-known in colonial history as a 17th- and 18th-century Native American community on the border between French and English colonial territories (Morrison 1984). It was reported as early as the beginning of the 17th century, perhaps by Samuel de Champlain and certainly by Samuel Purchas in 1625, although it is best known through accounts of the Jesuit priest Sebastian Rale who later resided there for about 30 years (Prins and Bourque 1987; Sprague 1906). Although much has been written about the Historic Contact period native community at Norridgewock, the archeological potential of several sites at the locale has not been demonstrated until recently (Cowie and Petersen 1992; Prins and Bourque 1987). This overview of the Norridgewock Archaeological District National Historic Landmark provides an example of the compatibility of both site preservation goals and archeological research, and shows that the two can beneficially work hand-in-hand.

The Norridgewock National Historic Landmark presently encompasses three separate archeological properties in the towns of Norridgewock, Madison, and Starks in Somerset County, Maine; the Old Point Mission site (ME 69-2), the Sandy River site (ME 69-24) and the Tracy Farm site (ME 69-11). Although the Old Point Mission and the Tracy Farm sites were previously known to local artifact collectors and, in the case of the Old Point Mission, from a rich his-

torical record, the University of Maine at Farmington Archaeology Research Center (UMF) conducted the first systematic excavations in the area in 1988 and 1990. All three sites are located on land adjacent to the Weston Hydroelectric Project, a facility owned and operated by Central Maine Power Company (CMP), the largest utility in the state. Like many such facilities in Maine, the Federal Energy Regulatory Commission license for the Weston Project was due to expire in the early 1990s. UMF was contracted by CMP to conduct archeological phase I survey and phase II testing along the margins of the 39.8 kilometer (24.8 mile) long hydroelectric head pond. Of the 41 aboriginal sites identified by UMF, four were found to contain deposits dating to the Historic Contact period. Of these four sites, three were determined eligible for listing on the National Register of Historic Places. These same three sites were later designated as the Norridgewock Archaeological District National Historic Landmark on April 12, 1993.

The Sandy River site (ME 69-24) is located in the town of Starks near the confluence of the Kennebec and Sandy rivers. First identified by UMF investigators in 1988 (Torrence, et al. 1990), phase II testing in 1990 identified the presence of singularly well-preserved deeply buried deposits dating from 600 to 300 years ago. Several hearths, a probable roasting pit, and a buried living surface were found beneath buried alluvial deposits indicative of frequent flooding. One of the most exciting finds was the discovery of a large portion of a St. Lawrence Iroquoian pot in a datable fea-